

Lakeside School Re-envisioning Video Series February 2020

Following is the text of a video featuring Lakeside's Head of School Bernie Noe talking about calendar changes related to Lakeside's re-envisioning process. Find more about the re-envisioning at lakesideschool.org/re-envisioning.

Video 4: "Re-envisioning Lakeside School: The Calendar"

Length: 7:50

Hello again, everyone. I know you have missed getting these new re-envisioning videos, especially when you could have gathered around with family and friends to watch them during the snow days. But now, the wait is over! The season finale of Re-envisioning Lakeside School: The Calendar is here!

While watching this exciting video, you might want to have a [printed version of the new school calendar](#) in front of you. Just as it was tough to keep straight all the characters straight in Game of Thrones, there will be a lot of dates coming at you in a hurry!

And thanks for the feedback that many of you sent in on the skills, competencies, and mindsets. You may have read in [Inside Lakeside](#), we have made final adjustments to those and will spend this spring sorting out how we will teach them.

But right now, I want to talk to you about major changes we're making to the school calendar and why we're making them. These changes will take effect in the 2021-2022 school year. So, not next year, but the year following. Please plan family vacation schedules accordingly.

We are making these changes to the school calendar primarily for two reasons:

1. We hope to create a healthier, less stressful environment for our students. And
2. We hope to create space not currently available in the academic calendar to offer Lakeside students different kinds of learning experiences – opportunities that will facilitate teaching them the skills, competencies, and mindsets that they will need to thrive in the world of 2050.

The first calendar change is a new, weeklong fall break in October. By taking a week off in October, we hope to set a more reasonable pace for the students. The new break will come after approximately six weeks of school. Seniors can work on their college applications during this time, or rest, and everyone else can rest, spend time with family, friends, read, sleep, or do whatever it is they do to unwind. We hope that adding a fall break will relieve stress, and also model and inspire a healthy mindset for our students.

Currently, we start school sometime between August 31 and September 6 – either the week before or after Labor Day – and we are in school without much of a break until Thanksgiving. The 12-week push from Labor Day to Thanksgiving leaves our students unnecessarily stressed and exhausted. There's just no good reason to continue doing it this way!

It has always been the case that after Thanksgiving, the school breaks are close together, and during the second semester students typically are not in school for more than six weeks without a week off.

The second change: we will have Veterans Day off in November to honor and reflect on the sacrifice of those who have served our nation.

To make these days off in the fall possible without losing class time, we will extend the school calendar. Starting in the 2021-2022 school year, we will start school one week earlier than it currently does and end school one week later.

A new Upper School class schedule may accompany the calendar changes. The decision about the new Upper School schedule will be made this spring, in May, after we've had a three-week beta-test and heard from the students and faculty about it.

With the exception of the fall break and Veterans Day, all current school breaks will remain the same. All Lakeside students grades 5-12 will have the same days off throughout the year.

The last big change in the calendar is a new program we are calling Lion Term. The Lion Term will be three weeks of for-credit work, where students can have a variety of educational experiences that will help them develop the skills, and competencies, and mindsets we believe will prepare them for success, both in their future educational goals and in their personal and professional lives.

In the Upper School, Lion Term will be three contiguous weeks in early March, right after midwinter break. During this term students can, for example:

- Take a semester course for credit, similar to a Summer School course.
- Go on a GSL or outdoor trip that is part of an academic course, or a standalone experience.
- Guided by a teacher, work collaboratively with other students in attempting to solve a real-world problem like the homelessness crisis in Seattle.
- With school permission, students might also choose to be away from school during these three weeks working, for example, on a presidential campaign or climate activism, or doing an internship.

Inspired by the skills, competencies, and mindsets, we will be designing new courses, including interdisciplinary courses that further develop our student's cognitive flexibility. We hope to offer differentiated learning courses, meaning courses that map to students' skill level rather than grade level. A math class might, for example, have some 7th graders studying alongside seniors, and students from several grades might collaborate on some project.

Setting aside three weeks as an intensive learning opportunity allows our students to practice unstructured problem-solving, go deep on a subject, and spend time learning off campus. And it offers another opportunity for cross-grade-level partnerships and friendships.

In the Middle School, to be developmentally appropriate, the Lion Term will be distributed as single weeks in the fall, winter, and spring. The individual weeks will be used for more ambitious outdoor trips, service learning, 8th grade Global Service Learning, and immersive, interdisciplinary courses.

We believe that Lion Term will open creative possibilities for our students and provide new ways for them to engage in the competencies and mindsets they will need to thrive in the world of the future.

I do want to offer one important caveat in the spirit of not overpromising and underdelivering on Lion Term: We have not yet begun to work on the logistics of the program, and while we are currently

taking a blue-sky approach, some of the options I have outlined may not be doable. We hope that they will be but, honestly, some of them may not be. We will, however, do our best to offer as much flexibility to our students as possible.

As I wrap up here, I want to reiterate one more time that our goal in changing the calendar is to lower the stress for our students, while at the same time providing the structure for Lakeside's re-envisioned curriculum, designed to prepare our students to make good decisions in their personal and professional lives in the world of 2050.

These changes, folks, are not groundbreaking. Many schools around the city and around the nation are doing the same. But they are significant changes for this school, and we do want you to fully understand them.

We're still working out details and weighing options, and we are curious to hear what you think. Parents and guardians: you can find a link to a survey about this proposed calendar change on the re-envisioning webpage.

Parents and guardians can also attend a calendar-focused Q&A on Thursday, March 5 at 7 p.m. at the Middle School. [Find the event details on our website.](#)

We will take your feedback into consideration!

Have a great winter and spring, everyone, and thanks for watching! And just know that if season one of the re-envisioning does well, we'll get started on season two.